

IN A SPECIAL JOINT MEETING OF THE WHITE PINE COUNTY COMMISSION AND THE FIRE COMMISSION HELD ON APRIL 16, 2018 IN THE COUNTY LIBRARY CONFERENCE ROOM IN ELY, NEVADA

The Following Were Present:

Commission Members

Richard Howe, Chairman  
Shane Bybee, Vice-Chairman  
Carol McKenzie, Commissioner  
Gary Perea, Commissioner  
Steve Stork, Commissioner  
Nichole Baldwin, Clerk of the Board  
Susan Lujan, Deputy Clerk

County Officials

Tim Woolever, WPC Fire District Chief  
Kathy Ricci, Human Resources Director  
Burton Hilton, WPC Assessor  
Bryan Pyle, Deputy District Attorney

Also Present

Geri Wopschall  
Ross Rivera, Ely Fire Chief  
Beau Carlson, WPC Fire District  
Anthony J. Gilbert, WPC Fire District

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Fire Commission Chairman Richard Howe called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m. Commissioner Gary Perea led the Pledge of Allegiance. Chairman Howe advised the assemblage that this is a joint County Commission and Fire Commission meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENT

WPC Assessor Burton Hilton agreed that separating the Emergency Management position would be good for the community, and the wage increase would also be good; he noted we have a difficult time getting qualified people in here. He did feel we're not advertising very hard, though. He noted that White Pine County has the only Fire/EMS people who are hiring career staff at the basic EMT level. When he researched our ISO ratings and looked at Station 1, he noted that the EMT Class has disappeared, and that we're going backward in providing our services. Our skill level is down, he continued, and we should be further along by now. He felt we haven't done a good job, and yet we've spent a lot of money. He continued that everyone on this Board has talked about combining services with the City, but he's never seen a plan evolve. He wants us to quit doing things "the White Pine County way, of saying why we can't do it, and learn to say how we can do it!" He wants to see us do something to improve things for the community for the future. He asked the Board to not continue to be the problem and perpetuating the downward spiral.

DISCUSSION/ACTION/APPROVAL TO ACCEPT THE RESIGNATION OF TIM WOOLEVER, DIRECTOR OF EMERGENCY SERVICES/DISTRICT FIRE CHIEF, EFFECTIVE APRIL 21, 2018

Chairman Richard Howe wished to clarify, is WPC Fire District Chief Tim Woolever resigning or retiring? Deputy District Attorney Bryan Pyle advised he's resigning from the position that he holds now. Commissioner Steve Stork provided his disclosure statement. Human Resources Director Kathy Ricci cited Chief Woolever's letter, which was handed out today. She explained that April 21<sup>st</sup> will be his last day, but he will still be on the McGill Volunteer Roster and will continue to assist in any kind of training and grant maintenance. Chairman Richard Howe entertained a motion for approval. Commissioner Steve Stork made a motion to accept the resignation of Tim Woolever, Director of Emergency Services/District Fire Chief, effective April 21, 2018. Commissioner Shane Bybee seconded. Motion carried.

For the County Commission side of this agenda item, Commissioner Gary Perea made a motion to accept the resignation of Tim Woolever, Director of Emergency Services/District Fire Chief, effective April 21, 2018. Commissioner Steve Stork seconded. Motion carried.

DISCUSSION/ACTION/APPROVAL TO APPOINT AN INTERIM FIRE CHIEF FOR THE WHITE PINE COUNTY FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT EFFECTIVE APRIL 22, 2018

Human Resources Director Kathy Ricci advised there is an interested party who would like to step in as our interim, but we need to discuss compensation for that. She noted Mr. Bill Ward has past experience as Fire Chief for the Lackawanna VFD, and also held the interim position several years ago. Finance Director Elizabeth Frances advised that the compensation consideration would have to come back to this Board. Commissioner Steve Stork provided his disclosure statement. Chairman Richard Howe noted that this Board could appoint an interim Fire Chief, and Director Ricci agreed that could be done. Commissioner Steve Stork advised that he knows Mr. Bill Ward, he's a fine gentleman but he's no longer a volunteer, he has resigned. He noted there is a senior employee is out there who has also done interim work, and he felt would be a better choice. Commissioner Carol McKenzie didn't realize Mr. Ward was no longer affiliated with us; Mr. Anthony Gilbert advised that he still volunteers, he's just not the Lackawanna VFD Chief any longer. Commissioner Shane Bybee felt that if we have an in-house employee, that would be the right way to go with this; that was Mr. Jim Derrick, but no one has approached him about this possibility. Chairman Howe advised he's dealt with Mr. Ward in the past, and noted that he's very active, and in discussions he's held with fire personnel it was generally acknowledged that he would be a good choice. Commissioner Gary Perea is also in favor of hiring Mr. Ward as interim Fire Chief, but he emphasized the fact that we have no liaison at this point. He noted the importance of having much contact between Mr. Ward and this Board. Commissioner Perea added that as he is included in the EMS portion of this, he felt both he and Chairman Howe would remain in contact with Mr. Ward. Commissioner Carol McKenzie advised she has worked with both of them, and either one could do a good job. Commissioner Gary Perea made a motion to appoint Mr. Bill Ward as interim Fire Chief. Commissioner Carol McKenzie seconded. Commissioner Steve Stork stated that "this is a slap in the face to our current employees, to go over them and go outside, but let's proceed." Commissioner Perea noted that in the past when Mr. Ward was our interim Fire Chief it was just a matter of coordination; he felt Mr. Ward would have that experience and knowledge. Mr. Gilbert commented that it is unknown if Mr. Jim Derrick would even be interested. He asked about the schedule, and noted we're already short 2 people; Commissioner McKenzie noted that would be a valid concern. Chairman Howe noted the motion and second on the floor. Motion carried 3:2, with Commissioners Steve Stork and Shane Bybee voting in opposition.

District Attorney Mike Wheable noted that for the County Commission portion, no support is needed as this pertains to the Fire District.

DISCUSSION/ACTION/APPROVAL OF AN ALTERNATIVE SOLUTION TO SEPARATE THE EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT DUTIES FROM THE DISTRICT FIRE CHIEF/DIRECTOR OF EMERGENCY SERVICES JOB DESCRIPTION WITH THE OPTION TO HIRE A HALF-TIME DIRECTOR OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

Human Resources Director Kathy Ricci asked if there was any interest in separating the Emergency Management position from the District Fire Chief and make this a half-time position instead? She provided a brief history of how that had been done in the past; it was separated out, and then combined just a few years ago. Director Frances advised that the combined position is 50% from grant funding, 25% paid from EMS, and 25% paid from the Fire District. If this is separated, the Fire Chief would start at a lower wage, as she explained. The other position would be 50% grant funds and 50% General Fund, as we would have to have a local match on our Federal grants; this would impact our General Fund. To clarify, separating the positions would have an additional cost; she added our return on investments for these funds are structured at this point. Commissioner Steve Stork provided his disclosure statement. Commissioner Stork stated that we paid \$50,000 for a document, and this Board refuses to acknowledge anything that was in it; he continued that while we know it was fed by false information, but nothing was ever done to clear it up. Commissioner Gary Perea advised that he and Commissioner Stork are opposed on this issue; that plan was done with input from both the City and the County, and he didn't believe the information was exaggerated. He continued that the document lays the groundwork on how the City/County could work together and could somehow combine in the future. However, he noted, that would only happen if both parties were willing to move forward. He did feel that the City "skirted" some of the things that were in the plan, and didn't address some of the issues. Commissioner Shane

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Bybee disagreed, and felt it addressed exactly some of the problems that were out there. Commissioner Perea felt that we haven't established trust, such as getting training done together, to begin with. The agreement, in his opinion, spells out how we can become one Fire entity, and yet the City has continually said no, so their Fire Dept. would be separate from the County. During the escalating discussion, District Attorney Mike Wheable cited this agenda item is about duties, and any comments made on combining services need to tie in with that, in order to protect this Board under these discussions. Director Ricci cited the Job Description for this and noted this Board can review it and decide what they would want this individual to do. Chairman Howe felt this would all be too much for just one person to handle; while splitting the times doesn't seem to be working, perhaps totally splitting the duties might be better. Director Frances replied to a question from Commissioner Perea, that the Fire District would be sustainable for 9-10 years as it stands now. Commissioner Bybee commented that we can't afford to throw more money at this when it isn't going to fix the problem, which has always been there no matter what we've done; we need to get at the heart of our issues. Director Frances noted that she had put a Grant Manager back into the budget. The Emergency Manager position could pursue these County grants for all County Departments, she advised. It would be possible to separate this out, leave it full-time, and in a year we can revisit this to see if we're getting a good return on our investment. Chairman Richard Howe entertained a motion for the alternative solution as discussed. Commissioner Gary Perea made a motion to separate out the Emergency Management duties from the District Fire Chief/Emergency Management Services position. Commissioner Carol McKenzie seconded. Motion carried 3:2, with Commissioners Steve Stork and Shane Bybee voting in opposition. For the County Commission side, Commissioner Gary Perea made a motion to separate out the Emergency Management duties from the District Fire Chief/Emergency Management Services position. Commissioner Carol McKenzie seconded. Motion carried 3:2, with Commissioner Steve Stork and Shane Bybee voting in opposition. District Attorney Mike Wheable noted the option to go to a half-time position should be included in the motion. Commissioner Gary Perea restated his motion for the Fire Commission portion to include the option of a half-time Director of Emergency Management. Commissioner Carol McKenzie restated her second to include the option of a half-time Director of Emergency Management. Motion carried 3:2, with Commissioners Steve Stork and Shane Bybee voting in opposition.

#### DISCUSSION/ACTION/APPROVAL TO BEGIN RECRUITMENT PROCESS TO REPLACE THE WHITE PINE COUNTY FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT FIRE CHIEF

Human Resources Director Kathy Ricci clarified this is to request approval to begin the process for replacing just the Fire Chief. Commissioner Steve Stork provided his disclosure statement. Commissioner Shane Bybee advised that we have an interim Fire Chief appointed, so we're covered; we need to go back to the table with the City and come up with a feasible solution. He felt we should just let the interim Fire Chief handle this and do negotiations in the future. Commissioner Steve Stork agreed, pointing out we've had 10 Fire Chiefs in the past 10 years; Chairman Richard Howe corrected that figure, noting that we've had interim Chiefs in between the actual hiring, but there's still been a lot. Commissioner Stork stated that we run a dysfunctional Fire Dept. at best, we don't staff appropriately, and we don't have meaningful response from either the Firefighters or EMS. Chairman Howe called a halt to the discussion and noted this is just for approval to get the recruitment going forward. Chairman Howe entertained a motion to approve. Commissioner Gary Perea noted that as long as what we're getting from the City Fire Dept., they want to remain separate, and just contract with us, he is not willing to go that direction. He continued that there needs to be complete consolidation by both entities, and he can't see us being ready to even start in that direction. He felt now would be a good time to seek a good candidate. He added that he feels differently that our Fire District is dysfunctional and not meeting our needs; he felt the Fire District has done a wonderful job for the County, especially in the outlying areas. We just need to take this to the next step, which is to hire a fully qualified Fire Chief and support him. Commissioner Shane Bybee agreed that considering what we give the Fire District, they're doing a great job. We just can't afford to give them the staff they need to give the response they need to do. He stated that "Station 1 is 'twisting in the wind' with not enough help to get them through a call. The Fire District isn't failing, rather he felt we have failed them. Commissioner Carol McKenzie disagreed; we're short on EMT's, but she's been on a lot of runs and she's never been without the support she needed. Discussion was again put into focus by Chairman Howe when the Board began to cite a specific instance involving extrication. He again entertained a motion for approval.

Commissioner Carol McKenzie made a motion to begin recruitment process to replace the WPC Fire District Chief. Commissioner Gary Perea seconded. Motion carried 3:2, with Commissioners Steve Stork and Shane Bybee voting in opposition.

DISCUSSION/ACTION/APPROVAL OF A COMPENSATION PACKAGE FOR THE WHITE PINE COUNTY FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT FIRE CHIEF

Director Ricci provided a handout of the exempt salary scale. Commissioner Steve Stork provided his disclosure statement. It was noted that while much depends upon the individual's experience, the starting salary is shown as \$60,000. Director Ricci clarified that they could start higher on the pay scale pursuant to their experience. Commissioner Gary Perea would like us just to advertise to see what kind of applicants we would get for now. Commissioner Carol McKenzie asked if we could add "commensurate with experience" or do we have to just put the starting salary in there; it was noted both could be included. Chairman Richard Howe entertained a motion to approve. Commissioner Gary Perea made a motion to approve the compensation package for the White Pine County Fire Protection District Fire Chief. Commissioner Carol McKenzie seconded. Motion carried 3:2, with Commissioners Steve Stork and Shane Bybee voting in opposition. It was noted this was solely for the Fire District, not the County Commission.

Deputy District Attorney Bryan Pyle advised the next two agenda items may be opened simultaneously. This was done. It was also clarified that these pertain to the County Commission, and not for the Fire District.

DISCUSSION/ACTION/APPROVAL TO BEGIN THE RECRUITMENT PROCESS TO HIRE A DIRECTOR OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT; and

DISCUSSION/ACTION/APPROVAL OF A COMPENSATION PACKAGE FOR A DIRECTOR OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

In reply to a query from Chairman Richard Howe, Deputy District Attorney Bryan Pyle advised that based on earlier discussion, this would be a half-time position. Following brief discussion, Commissioner Gary Perea made a motion to approve the recruitment for a half-time position for the Director of Emergency Management. Commissioner Carol McKenzie seconded. Motion carried 3:2, with Commissioners Steve Stork and Shane Bybee voting in opposition. Next the Board considered the compensation package; Chairman Howe entertained a motion for approval. Commissioner Carol McKenzie made a motion to approve a compensation package for the Director of Emergency Management. Commissioner Gary Perea seconded. Motion carried 3:2, with Commissioners Steve Stork and Shane Bybee voting in opposition.

DISCUSSION/ACTION/APPROVAL TO BEGIN THE RECRUITMENT PROCESS TO REPLACE THE WHITE PINE COUNTY FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT FIRE CHIEF/DIRECTOR OF EMERGENCY SERVICES

Deputy D.A. Pyle recalled for the Board that a decision has already been made on this. He also advised that the Chairman can open up the next two agenda items simultaneously, and they pertain just to the Fire District.

DISCUSSION ONLY WITH THE STATE OF NEVADA DIVISION OF PUBLIC AND BEHAVIORAL HEALTH IN REGARDS TO WHAT IS ALLOWABLE WITH THE STATE OF NEVEDA'S AGREEMENT WITH WHITE PINE COUNTY'S EMERGENCY SERVICE TIERED LICENSE; and

DISCUSSION/ACTION/APPROVAL FOR A FIREFIGHTER I/BASIC EMT JOB DESCRIPTION WHICH IS ALLOWABLE WITH THE STATE OF NEVADA'S AGREEMENT WITH WHITE PINE COUNTY EMERGENCY SERVICE'S TIERED SERVICE LICENSE

Director Ricci had contacted the State to see if they could present how the tiered license works for Station 1, but they were unavailable this morning. She explained the licensing is pretty basic; it involves intermediate life support, and the tiered license could be basic plus a licensed EMT. WPC Fire District Chief

Tim Woolever clarified that based on the rural Nevada response, due to our population being less than 10,000, we're not required to have a higher level of care. Chairman Richard Howe wants to hear from the State on this issue at the April 25<sup>th</sup> Commission meeting, or during the first meeting in May. Commissioner Steve Stork asked if we will be going with the basic level EMT then? He noted we just gave the "bottom rung" a raise. Chairman Richard Howe explained that the raise was given in order to be comparable to the rest of the State, it didn't pertain to their qualifications, we just brought them up since the County was low compensation-wise.

Human Resources Director Kathy Ricci noted it's difficult to find qualified individuals to fill the slots for Station 1 EMTs. EMTs need certification plus the possibility of advancing to the AEMT level; Commissioner Steve Stork wanted to know how many years should they be given in order to advance? Director Ricci noted it's up to this Board. Commissioner Shane Bybee commented that we put the starting positions up 4 notches, and now we're lowering the bar; he doesn't understand this. Finance Director Elizabeth Frances noted that we had heard during Public Comment that no other Fire District in the State hires basics. However, when she actually compared these, many of them do hire at the basic level. They are they given a timeline within which they must achieve that advanced certification, she added. Commissioner Stork clarified that what he had said was, no other Fire service in the State offers a basic ambulance service. So, he asked, will we be running advanced ambulance service with basic EMTs? Director Frances responded in the negative, noting that we can combine resources to provide that advanced licensing. Director Ricci added we can have a basic EMT plus a driver only, per regulations. Commissioner Gary Perea advised that hopefully when both EMTs are running, one is already an AEMT coming from Station 1. Commissioner Stork saw this as possibly looking to lowering our recruiting standards. Chairman Howe noted that the bar was set too high, and we can't recruit anyone here at our current entry level with higher qualifications; we need to give them the opportunity to be certified. The question was posed how many ambulance runs require AEMTs; Commissioner Perea advised that from 95-98% of the runs are for basic level care. If anything higher than that is needed, Station 1 is sent to cover the outlying areas for those needs. Commissioner McKenzie agreed and noted Lund is either intermediate or higher; Commissioner Perea noted Baker is still basic, level 1. Following further discussion, Chairman Richard Howe entertained a motion for approval. Director Ricci added that we're in the process and there are 2 vacancies now that need to be filled. Commissioner Carol McKenzie made a motion to approve the Firefighter I/Basic EMT Job Description as requested. Commissioner Gary Perea seconded. Motion carried 3:2, with Commissioners Steve Stork and Shane Bybee voting in opposition.

#### PUBLIC COMMENT

Ely City Fire Chief Ross River<sup>o</sup> noted for the Board's information that the City is also tiered, when you can use the driver only. They try to maintain AEMTs on paid staff to ensure the safety of the advanced services licenses, as he explained; that helps to maintain that tiered service. So what this Board just voted on, he advised, the City does the same thing, in order to maintain that certification.

Tony Gilbert thanked the Board for the opportunity to comment. To his knowledge, ambulances leaving from Station 1 always had an EMT on board; they do leave an AEMT at Station 1 at all times. He added that the Henderson, Nevada Fire Dept. are going through recruitment of EMT/Basic Firefighter with a starting salary of \$65,000. He emphasized that we're trying as hard as possible to ensure Station 1 is covered with an AEMT at all times.

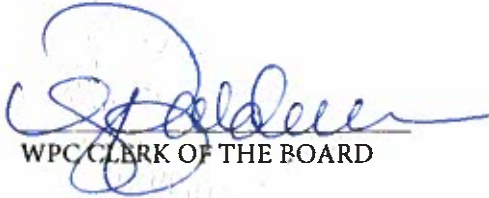
#### ADJOURNMENT

Chairman Richard Howe entertained a motion to adjourn at 9:46 a.m. Commissioner Carol McKenzie made the motion; Commissioner Steve Stork seconded. Motion carried.

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS  
COUNTY OF WHITE PINE  
STATE OF NEVADA

BY: Richard Howe  
CHAIRMAN

ATTEST:

  
WPC CLERK OF THE BOARD